

music in ancient indian drama

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IN BHARATA we have not only a treatise on drama more complete than Aristotle, but an encyclopædia of ancient Indian culture. I have to restrain myself from the temptation to review the rich contents of the 36 chapters of Bharata's *Natya Sastra* and confine myself to only one of the subjects of the book, music. Of the ancient art of Indian music, there were earlier treatises but at present they are no longer extant, and on the science of Indian music itself, Bharata happens to be our earliest authority. I shall deal here with an aspect of music in Bharata which is less known and studied, the aspect in which the art comes to be handled by Bharata as an embellishment and a necessary complement* of Sanskrit drama. The name of *Natya* in Sanskrit comprehends both drama and dance, though popular usage now appropriates *Natya* for dance and applies to drama the name of its leading variety, the *Nataka*.

It is with reference to drama that this study of music is most interesting, and indeed significant, for recently under the impact of the Western stage and realistic acting, India has developed a new modern stage, and except among research scholars or the common country folk still delighting in the lingering forms of the traditional drama, there is not likely to be any awareness of the intimate way in which drama and music grew together in ancient India.

All the surviving forms of the indigenous drama are completely musical and the different details of this music and its practice in these plays will all leap into a new significance when, as a result of a study like the present, we see that their roots go deep to Bharata, and the tradition of this mode of musical production of the drama has long an unbroken continuity. This study will also reveal Sanskrit drama in a new dimension to the pure literary student of that branch of Sanskrit literature, who rarely gets interested in it as an art produced on the stage.

To supplement Bharata's text, we have the sidelights that Sanskrit literature—the plays themselves, as well as other works—poems and works of rhetoric—throws on the subject. Bharata's text was soon followed by that of Kohala's, which is in fact mentioned in Bharata's work itself at the end in a manner that legitimately gives rise to the suspicion that part of Kohala's work got absorbed into Bharata's. Abhinavagupta, Bharata's commentator, confirms this by drawing attention to a specific context. This text of Kohala, most important after that of Bharata, is not yet available, the several manuscripts going by that name being late compilations. Kohala devoted much attention to our subject, and in his time, the minor dramatic varieties called the *Uparupakas* in contrast to the major ones, the *Rupakas* of Bharata, had greatly developed; the main

A panel from Sikar museum



distinguishing feature of the Uparupaka, as against the Rupaka, is that it was more full of music and dance.

We can have recourse to the help of Kohala in an indirect way, through such use as Abhinavagupta makes of his text which was available to him. Abhinavagupta, the commentator on Bharata, though later than all the plays which will be mentioned, is our only available commentator on Bharata. The production of a Sanskrit play was certainly a living tradition in his time, and particularly in his part of the country, Kashmir, which could make in that age such rich contribution to poetry, drama, dance music, and criticism. In the latter part of the 8th century A.D. Damodaragupta, minister of King Jayapida of Kashmir, wrote the Kuttanimata in which the production of the Sanskrit play *Ratnavali* of King Harsha is described, and, apart from, on the one hand, the general references to musicians in the prologues to all the plays, and on the other, Bharata's treatise on dramaturgy, we have, if it is needed, the clear testimony of Damodaragupta of the musical production of the Sanskrit drama.

If a historical corroborative evidence is needed, we may cite I-tsing who mentions in the record of his travels in India¹ the setting of the play *Nagananda* of the same royal author referred to earlier, to music, literally string and pipe, and being produced with dancing and action, and mentions also a similar musical dramatic production of poet Candraka on the theme of the Vessantarajataka. I shall cite also the evidence of a few music treatises; much of these sources being either in manuscripts or defective editions—and Bharata himself is in this latter category—the collection and collation of the material have naturally been a difficult task.

The indigenous and authentic drama of India was essentially an art which never divorced itself from music and dance. It was most natural for its poetry to heighten into song and its action to gather into dance. Leave alone the drama, even the poem cannot be read, even to-day, by the Indian without a Raga. The naturalistic drama, as has been

developed recently, would appear to be a mere *tour de force*; at any rate, as I have shown in my Paper on *Natyadharmi* or *Idealism and Conventions of Bharata's stage*², Bharata considered such production inferior, *Bahya*, and the one with music and dance, the more germane art, *Abhyantara* (N.S. xxiv 70–72 Kasi edn.) Bharata says that the production is colourless without music (xxxii 450) and that there is hardly any situation to heighten whose effect music cannot be employed (xxxiii 18).

Bharata and Indian tradition do not subscribe to Tolstoy's view that the two arts, the dramatic and the musical, cannot be brought together without each diluting the other. Abhinavagupta observes (p. 98 Madras Ms., Vol. III): "Others view that even without being mounted with proper song and instrumentation, the text of the play that is merely read does produce the effect, but that is not doing it all-right; drama is incomplete there; sage Bharata desires it to be complete with all its components so that not only the few of great imaginations, but everybody could be fully affected." It is well-known that the ancients among the rhetoricians held *Rasa* as primarily pertaining to drama. One of the impediments, Abhinavagupta says, to a spectator having the complete realisation of the *Rasa* or aesthetic bliss is his failure to get attuned in heart owing to other preoccupations still clouding his mind.

The purpose of the preliminary music is precisely here, to prepare the audience so to say and make them, as the technical Sanskrit name for an art-enjoyer puts it, *Sa-hrdaya*, of one heart. This purpose of music is relevant not merely at the beginning, but all through the performance, and apart from the contextual significance, this general purpose runs through the whole of the music fitted to the Acts or their intervals. (Abhinavagupta, Madras Ms. Vol. III, p. 94). This music falls into two main divisions, instrumental and vocal. The instruments are of four classes, string (*Tata*), bored (*Sushira*), percussion (*Avanaddha*) and cymbals (*Ghana*) intended to keep time. Of the stringed instruments, more than one variety was used, *Citra*, *Vipanchi*, and so on, played with fingers or plectrum, and of instruments of percussion, the chief was the three-faced *Bhanda-vadya* or

¹ A Record of the Buddhist Religion as practised in India and the Malay, Archipelago (A.D. 671-95) By I-Tsing. Translated by J. Takakusu. Oxford. 1896. pp. 163-64.

² *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, Vol. VII, pp. 362-3, 373.

Tripushkara and there were also the Panava and Dardura. Each group was called a *Kutapa*, the string-group, which included the flute also, the *tata-kutapa*; and the drum-group, the *Avanaddha-kutapa*. *Kutapa* might have signified the rugs on which the orchestras were seated, but Abhinavagupta suggests an ideal etymology from the glow and brilliance that they imparted to the stage. Like the flutist, the vocal singers also sat with the string-group. Those that took part in the play constituted the third *Kutapa* called *Natya-kṛta*.

I am mentioning this obvious third group to draw attention to significant data regarding the stage-artistes of ancient India. It is well-known that both men and women together took part in the enactment of plays but what is not so widely known is that, as borne out by the texts, the Kuttanimata for instance, there were dramatic troupes wholly composed of women artistes in which even the male roles were played by women, and Damodaragupta makes the manager of the troupe pay a compliment to the lady who rendered the part of the hero, King Udayana. As regards the department of music, Bharata says that as women's voices were endowed by nature with sweetness, they are to render the songs, and men should put forth their vigour at the instruments (N.S. XXXII-465-8), this view of Bharata being supported by King Sudraka in his play.

As I have indicated in my paper on the four Vṛttis or dramatic modes,³ Sanskrit drama arose as part of the festival of Indra's flag-staff. A lot of ceremony and propitiatory acts marked its beginning and all this preliminary was referred to as *Purvaranga*, literally the pre-performance acts.

This *Purvaranga* was done either elaborately or in a simple manner, *Citra* or *Suddha*, and the style of its renderings also varied according to the type of play that followed, a love-theme having a delicate set and a vigorous theme having a vigorous set of preliminary displays, *lalita* and *uddhata*. All the items of the *Purvaranga* were marked by music, instrumental or vocal and dance and while Bharata himself gives a large number of details regarding these songs and dances, the work of Nandikesvara, not yet recovered but quoted by Abhinavagupta, devotes great attention to these music-details of the elaborate *Purvaranga*. Bharata, however,

with the sense of proportion characteristic of him, does not fail to remark : One should not tarry too long over the music and dance of the preliminary functions ; not only the waiting spectators but the players themselves will feel tired, and artistes have to conserve their energies for the main show (v. 165—7).

This preliminary music is marked by ten stages each of which is known by a specific name, and nine of which were out of the view of the audience, being played from behind the curtain, and on this score called external music or *Bahir-gita*.

The first is the setting up of the orchestra called *Pratyahara* and some note of this may be taken for the bearing it has on the architecture of the ancient Indian theatre. I would invite your attention here to my paper on the subject⁴ a summary of which together with my drawing of the rectangular type of theatre was reproduced in one of the earliest issues of INDIAN ART AND LETTERS. The curtain ran between the acting stage-space called *Rangapitha* and a portion behind it with a raised platform at the centre called the head of the stage, *Ranga-sirsha*; on either side of this platform were the two entrances to the green-room.

Now in between these two entrances are the musicians to be set ; Abhinavagupta adds that on one side is the leading drum facing the East with the other drums on its sides ; on the other side, facing each other are the vocalists to sit with the flutists and lutists by their sides. This arrangement of the instruments is *Pratyahara*, literally bringing together ; the musicians coming and taking their seats is *Avatarana*.

The third stage is *Arambha*, the musicians adjusting the instruments among themselves ; the sounding of the instruments in some set rhythms so that all of them may hear is *Asravana* ; then follows an interesting stage called *Vaktra-pani* in which pure rhythm-syllables, *Sushka-aksharas* were played, and that this is so is made plain by poet Ratnakara in his *Haravilasa*, which poem is a mine of information to the student of Bharata.

Parighattana and *Sanghotana* are the trial playing, so to say, on the strings ; then, the chief drum and the strings join to play the *Margasarita* and the *Asarita* which has three

³ *Journal of Oriental Research, Madras*, Vol. VII, pp. 41-2.

⁴ *Triveni, Madras*, Vol. V.

varieties. These bring on the main feature of the Purvaranga, the song of praise to a God, and the bamboo representing the Flag-Staff of Indra, Jarjara; this stage is called *Utthapana* as it practically opens the dramatic show. A number of set verses of prayer and benediction for the successful conduct of the play are sung, the flower-offering or Pushpanjali is made, obeisances are made by the stage-manager, Sutradhara, and dances are also gone through.

By reason of its propitiatory effect this section is called Nandi, the delighter of the gods. You will appreciate this narration when I tell you that Bharata's text here is confusing, that later writers like Visvanatha, author of the *Sahitya Darpana* record, that the elaborate Purvaranga was no longer alive, and that a clear view of this is necessary to understand the meaning of almost the first statement in any Sanskrit play: "*Nandyante tatah pravisati Sutradharah*"—"and now at the end of the Nandi, the stage-manager enters." Also it will throw light on and help a proper understanding of the elaborate preliminaries and the *Purappadu* of the Kathakali.

Now, the point at which the texts of the dramas say "at the end of the Nandi, enter the Sutradhara" is called the door or opening of the show, *Rangadvara*. The verse of prayer or benediction that we usually find at the beginning of a Sanskrit play is sung and rendered in gesticulation here. Later texts record that the manager sings the propitiatory verse or prayer in the middle-register, *madhyama-svara*.

The main Sutradhara retires after this and one, partaking of his character and function, but referred to as Sthapaka or promulgator of the play comes on, calls his assistant or standby or the clown (Pariparsvika or Vidushaka) and then his wife (Grihini or Nati).

The conversation with the former two constitutes the *Tri-gata*, in the course of which the play and the author and the occasion of the production are mentioned, and by reference to the merits of the dramatist and his work, the interest of the audience is roused (*Prarocana*). Usually when his wife is called, the Sthapaka Sutradhara asks her to sing a song on the season, *Rtu*, and this song of the Nati is for the infusing of the proper atmosphere and the securing of a responsive state among the audience, *Ranga-prasadana*. It is at the end of this that by a

dexterous device the opening act of the play proper is inducted and the two retire.

The music of the drama proper consists of songs and instrumental background. The songs are wholly those that come under what is called *Dhruva-gana*. In a Sanskrit drama, you will have noted that the stage-directions are at the barest minimum. The reader makes out the situation, state of feeling, name and nature of character, his dress, appearance and occasion of appearance from the sidelights and significant references in the speeches and dialogues that follow. When the play is mounted, whatever is to be made out, having not been expressly stated by the dramatist, is to be supplied by the songs. This, Bharata says, is the main function of these songs. (XXXII 375).

These songs are called *Dhruvas* because, Abhinava suggests, they stabilise so to say or form the firm basis of the production or their themes are of fixed significance. They are of five kinds according to their place and specific function: the first is the entrance-*Dhruva Pravesiki*, which introduces the character to come on the stage. Corresponding to it, is the exit-*Dhruva* which communicates the departure of a character in the middle or end of an act. The entrance-song is indeed the most important, and applied even to the entry of the stage-manager and others of the prologue and the Purvaranga and it had survived in traditional practice to most recent times.

In South Indian traditions of dance-drama, the name Dhruva survives in the form *Daru* and there is no entry of a character without his or her appropriate *Patra-pravesa-daru* being sung; and the first appearances of characters with dance-sequences set to these entrance-compositions form the highlights of the performances. In between the Dhruvas, of entry and exit, while characters are in action within a scene or act, there are three *Prasadiki Akshepiki* and *Antara*. *Prasada* is to burnish or reinforce a mood already introduced; the Dhruva discharging this duty in *Prasadiki*. *Akshepiki* is the Dhruva for the switch-on to a changed mood or situation. *Antara* is the Dhruva sung when a gap or mishap in the production has to be covered up, or when owing to the over-powering feeling, there is a tense pause in the action, as when one is in deep grief, in loss of memory, in sleep or has fallen down.

Before we decide some of the facts pertaining to this music of the Dhruvas, it is necessary to make a brief reference to some of the plays themselves where vestiges of Dhruvas are seen, for an integration of theory and practice is required to bear out the prevalence and vogue of this which many of the readers of the plays naturally miss.

In the *Anargharaghava* of Murari sage Visvamitra, the opening character, is announced by a Dhruva. In the lost political play Devichandragupta, which I have reconstructed elsewhere,⁵ the exit of the hero Chandragupta in a state of feigned madness is found. Rajasekhara, poet and critic, who enriches his plays with learned references to principles of poetics and dramaturgy, has put in Dhruvas in his *Balaramayana*, *Balabharata* and *Vid-dhasalabhanjika*, and says regarding the use of the Dhruva: "It announces or explains the respective characters, delights the hearts of the audience and establishes the emotional continuity." In his *Kuttanimata*, Damodara-gupta sets forth the method of enacting the Ratnavali of King Harsha, and shows how the Dhruvas were employed. Above all, we have a unique Ms. of Act iv., the most emotional, of Kalidasa's *Vikramorvasiya*, depicting Pururavas almost mad in his love-lorn state, which has come to us in its musical edition, the version on which we have the equally precious comments of Ranganatha.

The purely literary editors and historians have been perplexed by this last mentioned version of *Vikramorvasiya*, and Pandit, Karmarkar and Keith have all delivered themselves of judgments wholly oblivious of the real nature of the songs here. Of course, the musical fittings in this version are late and are in the technique as it evolved in the post-Bharata period through Kohala and other writers.

The Dhruvas were not written by the poet himself; many of them took the lead of the verses in the play and would appear redundant, if seen from the wrong angle. In fact, my own idea about the peculiar prose-verse or Champu form of the Sanskrit drama is that to an original prose text, song-verses were added when the play was enacted; taking the suggestion from these song-verses or Dhruvas, the

poets themselves began to insert verses wherever the emotion or idea reached a degree of pointedness and needed effective expression.

In the great classical period, when the prose-verse dramatic masterpieces were produced, the stage-artists had their own composers who wrote the Dhruva-music, using the poet's contextual verses for guidance. The few cases cited above in which we find the dramatists themselves inserting a stray Dhruva are merely exceptions indulged in for novelty or to show the poet's knowledge of stage-technique.

These Dhruvas are remarkable for certain features: They are always in Prakrit language, which on one hand lights up their popular origin and on the other emphasises their adaptability for musical treatment. Secondly they are always symbolical, e.g., the effulgent and pure sage Visvamitra is described in terms of the sun; Chandragupta in terms of the moon and his inimical surrounding and the dark hint of bloodshed in terms of the red evening sky; mad Pururavas as a King of elephants restlessly roaming in the forest; the two lady friends of Urvashi as two female swans on the lake. Bharata sets forth a brief list of images suitable to different categories of characters for employment in Dhruva-compositions.

The evidence available is in favour of taking these Dhruvas as being sung by the musicians from behind the curtain; the practice in the surviving traditions in the country also points to this view; but the concerned actor himself, who had to identify himself with the theme of the song, was in the habit of joining in a snatch or two of it.

So far as the literary aspect of the Dhruva-composition is concerned, Bharata analyses the relation between metre and syllabic quality and sequence on the one hand and emotion on the other. The Dhruvas themselves are, according to their syllabic constitution, called by different significant names. Vigorous or violent characters should have the longer swollen metres, the use of shorts or longs in succession or their balanced alternation are to be from the point of view of emotional suggestiveness. The Avakrshta or drawn out Dhruva is for situations of sorrow and suffering; a Dhruva of a tempo is for situations of accidents, excitement, wonder, passion, horror, heroism, and terror; the soft variety, in a middle tempo is for scenes of love, entreaty, recapitulation, and the like.

⁵ *Journal of the Banaras Hindu University*, Vol. II, pp. 23-54, 307; and the Social Play in Sanskrit, Indian Institute of Culture, Bangalore.

Several other points of emotional suitability are analysed by Bharata, and he provides also for occasions of entries or exits without the related Dhruvas when the suddenness of action would rather not need the Dhruva (xxxii 351).

As music compositions, the Dhruvas have their two essential aspects melody and rhythm. All the illustrative songs in ancient music treatise from Bharata down to Sarngadeva in the earlier sections of his chapters, are connected with dance and drama; in Bharata they were Jatis, in later writers, the Ragas.

These melodic modes were analysed with reference to their emotional suitability. The intervals, notes and modes were all studied from the emotional viewpoint and schemes of harnessing different moulds for different dramatic situations were formulated. The emotional values of svaras are given by Bharata thus : Ma and Pa are to predominate in melodies used in love and comedy ; Sa and Ri in those for the heroic, the wonderful and the terrible ; Ga and Ni in pathos ; and Dha in the loathsome and the fearful. Of the Jatis, Shadjodichyavati and Shadjamadhyama are to be employed for love and fun, Arshabhi and Shadji for the heroic, the wonderful and the terrible and so on.

A larger analysis of music is also given with reference to the five junctures through which the plot of the play progresses from inception to denouement : In the opening, Madhyamagrama ; the Shadja-grama in the progression ; the Sadharita in the development ; Kaisikamadhyama in the pause ; and Kaisika in the conclusion. The relation between Raga and Rasa is further worked out by Matanga and Kasyapa. To illustrate with some stray applications, Matanga says : Of the Bhinna class of Ragas, Bhinna Shadja is useful for the entry of a hero proceeding on a hunt ; of the Gauda group, Gauda Panchama in separation of lovers ; of the Vesaras, Sauviraka is good for quietude and scenes of recluses and sages ; of the Sadharana Ragas, Bhammana Panchama for fatigue en route or in forests.

The lost treatise of Kasyapa is replete with further intricate schemes on this subject ; a few random examples from the extensive citation made by Abhinavagupta will suffice to show the extent of Kasyapa's analysis : When tranquillity follows anxious thought, Malavi followed by Gurjari is helpful ; Andhali may

be employed when intoxication waxes ; when a low character is indulging in the comic, Gandhara Panchama, a lady's cogitation, as distinct from a gentleman's may be properly backed up by Malava Panchama. Nanyadeva, in his Bharatabhashya of which only a single corrupt Ms. is known, gives the Raga, Tala and Rasa for every Dhruvametre in Bharata. When the undeniable relation of melody and emotional effect is granted, the artistes may deduce their schemes. The very name Raga has an emotional significance ; Matanga suggests that Jatis are so called because etymologically they are productive of moods.

It is well-known that a class of Ragas, in the classical period, was known as Kriyanga ; and the name is explained in the music treatises as referring to the dramatic use of these modes for emotional situations, exhilaration, sorrow and so on. The practice of making such studied use of Ragas in dramas was so well settled that Kalidasa refers to it in his Kumarasambhava when he makes the divine couple grace with their presence a dramatic performance done by the celestial damsels in honour of their marriage, and Anandavardhana, the critic, presses the emotional suggestiveness of Raga more than once in support of his argument for the acceptance of the comprehensive principle of suggestion.

Bharata gives some further, instructions on the method of rendering these Dhruva-songs for the drama : As their meaning is important, musical embellishments should not be resorted to in singing them ; or they should be so dexterously employed that an embellishment would heighten the effect and not retard the emotion or understanding. When a Dhruva-song is taken off, its rendering should have its first round without the drum-accompaniment which should join up later (xxxii440) ; this is necessary, as otherwise the audience may not hear properly the theme of the Dhruva.

During the Act, was there any other music besides the Dhruvas ? When mentioning the exceptions where there are to be no Dhruvas, Bharata speaks of an occasion called "music". What is this ? Actually, as in Act 1 of the Nagananda where Malayavati the heroine is singing, and in the second Act of the *Mala-vikagnimitra* where the heroine is dancing and in the *Ratnavali* which opens with spring songs and dances, music forms a part of the action of the play itself. These are not to be further

padded with Dhruvas. What about the many charming verses of the dramatists themselves? Were these sung by the respective characters in whose mouths the poets have put them? The evidence of surviving practice, as well as some observations of Bharata, his commentator and other writers, shows that they were sung. The Pathya is to be sung properly says Bharata in the 19th Ch. (verses 75 and 77). Blossoming forth on the boughs of the dialogue like so many flowers, the verses of the Sanskrit drama would indeed appear to frustrate themselves if they are not to be sung and rendered in *abhinaya*.

From King Bhoja who wrote on poetry, drama and music, we learn that a further kind of music was also employed. Certain situations required a certain melodic background and to throw this melody over the situation, a song was sung in which the Raga alone mattered, and not the words of the song. Bhoja refers to songs so used as *Sravya* or *Akshepiki*.

Having considered the melodic aspect, it is proper now to turn to the rhythmic side of this music. All these Dhruva songs were in specific Talas or time-measures, and in as great detail as in the case of the melodies, the time-measures are analysed by Bharata from the point of view of situation and feeling. Not only was the tempo of the Dhruva set so as to promote the *Rasa*, but even when there was no Dhruva song, and the actor moved or bent himself down or did something, there was pure instrumental playing intended to underline the mood. The different kinds of tempo, *Layas*, of both the songs as well as of pure instrumental accompaniment can be seen, for example, in the musical version of Act IV of the *Vikramorvasiya* referred to, where we come across the *Layas* called Dvipadika, Valantika, Jambhalika, Charcharika and Khandadhara.

In the *Malatimadhava*, as the main Act opens, the hero Madhava who has fallen in love is seen, in a dragging gait, vacant look and not quite all right in appearance; the direction is seen in Jagaddhara's commentary that the gait is to be in Dvipadi laya which is a slow measure composed of long *matras*. The gait and bearing, the very manner in which a character walks in, being most important for producing the first impression of the character and situation in the minds of the audience, Bharata devotes much attention to the fitting of suitable instrumental rhythmic accompaniment to the movements.

Kohala made much contribution to this study and Abhinavagupta, while explaining this part of Bharata, naturally quotes Kohala frequently. In chapter XII when dealing with gait of characters as such and again in chapter XXXIII while dealing with drum-accompaniment, Bharata gives detailed instructions as to the "layas" and the drum-music suitable to the movements of different characters and moods.

An example of this is the entrance Dhruva which should be in Madhya laya, what Kohala would call Valita or Valantika. All exalted characters of noble bearing should adopt the Dvipadi laya. The slow tempo, Sthita-laya, with the rhythmic beats at longer intervals should characterise the invalid, the fatigued, those in austerities, the fear-stricken, the amazed, those in longing, love, or grief or going at ease. Kohala calls this laya, *Ullasana*. A quickened tempo and beats at shorter intervals are called for in alarm, agitation, exhilaration, hurried errand, and similar occasions. Abhinavagupta gives the actual rhythms on the drum for the gait of the parasite Sekharaka in the Nagananda who comes reeling, with the glass of drink in his hand: Dham, Dhak, Tsuk, Dhi according to a well understood measure in his time. For clandestine love, Kohala gives the Dhruva-tala called Subhadra. Nartanaka or Upthulla are measure for scenes of terror and violence. Ullasana for the heroic, Jambhalika for pathos, Khandadhara composed of several quick steps with a long one at the end to depict movement by chariot are some examples to illustrate the musical treatment of gait.

In the chapter on the drum, Bharata speaks of pure drum-playing to accentuate action. The music in which there are no words or songs but only rhythm-syllables like Jhantum, Dhen, Dhi, Dhan, Ti, Kita—what are now called *Jati*, *Sol* or *Bol*, which were played on the instruments only, is called by Bharata, Nirgita Vadya and as the contribution of the Asuras to the Sanskrit theatre. Even now the memory of this ancient tradition survives in a high degree of instrumental proficiency being acclaimed in musical parlance as "Asura-sadhakam".

Just as Bharata spoke earlier of melodic Jatis, he speaks here of rhythmic Jatis, eighteen of them: Suddha, Ekarupa, Desanurupa, Desad-apeta-rupa, Paryaya, Vishkambha, Paryasta, Parshnisamasta, Dushkarakarana, Urdhvagoshtika, Ucchitika and so on. The

mnemonics of rhythm-syllables composing or indicating each and the character and situation to which each would be appropriate are also set forth by Bharata; taking once again characters and situations, he gives more elaborately the rhythm-syllables for the instrumental music. The most detailed treatment of this subject with definitions and illustrations is to be seen in Nanyadeva's *Bharatavbhashya*.

In the actual playing of the instruments too, there are different methods. Three primary styles are *Tattva*, *Anugata* and *Ogha*: *Tattva* is instrumentation that goes in advance piloting the coming theme; *Anugata* is close accompaniment of the song; *Ogha* is the play of the instruments in a crescendo. Not only these but another 19 other ways of instrumental playing are also spoken of by Bharata, each with its emotional and contextual application. "The instruments are the very bed of the performance" concludes Bharata and to appreciate the effect of such an instrumental set-off to an action one has only to see some of the more tense passages of the Kathakali, a scene such as Ravana trying to lift Sita portrayed with the accompaniment of the *Chendai*-drum.

The flute, too, was similarly effectively employed. The flute was the leading instrument in ancient India; it provided the pitch and served a function similar to the present drone. Matanga made special contributions on the flute and he expatiates on how it could be played to heighten the effect in love or anger, in separation or suffering.

The complements of music and dance were all the more pronounced in the types of plays that developed in the post-Bharata period. Bharata defined only ten kinds called *Rupakas*, a derivative type called *Natika* and two types of pure dance called *Tandava* and *Lasya*. The increased attention that came to be paid to the music of drama in the important work of the post-Bharata period, *viz.*, that of Kohala has been referred to already.

It was this Kohala who first codified also the further varieties of stage-performances which came to be known as the *Uparupakas*. From a smaller play of lesser theme value but increased music and dance interest to pure dances, these new varieties were of different grades and forms. The orchestral equipment, *Brinda*, of the stage also assumed greater proportions; of the five grades of this mentioned, the smallest consisted of a chief singer, two supporting singers, two additional voices, two

flutes, two leading drums and one minor drum, and a few others; and in the biggest set-up, there were as many as twelve male and twelve female voices, 26 flutes, six main and three subsidiary drums and some others.

In many of these lesser varieties of the repertoire of ancient Indian stage, there was either a continuous theme or story or a series of related or unrelated emotional ideas, all set to music, sung and danced and gesticulated. I shall mention only one of them: the *Ragakavya* which was a whole story composed in songs, sung and danced to; Abhinavagupta mentioned two specimens of this based on the story of the Ramayana: the *Raghavavijaya*, which was all through sung in the Takka Raga, and the *Marichavadha*, in the Kakubhagramaraga. A composition which would employ several Ragas would be a *Chitra-Raga-kavya*, *e.g.* the celebrated *Gitagovinda* of Jayadeva. These *Uparupakas* are thus the link between Bharata and the dance-drama traditions that developed in different parts of the country,⁶ the Assamese *Sattri*, the Bengali *Yatra*, the Telugu and Kannada *Yakshagana*, the *Bhagavata Nataka* of Andhra and Tamilnad and the Kathakali of Malabar, some at least of which are still not dead.

The permeation of music in these surviving forms, and the method of its employment, as also a few of their technical terms there, are a sure guide to visualise how the resources of music were harnessed by Bharata for the Sanskrit drama. Wide in its range, minute and thorough in its analysis, Bharata's scheme applied this music with effect, appropriateness and sense of proportion. Song, action and word followed in one unbroken continuity, and as one saw no beginning, middle or end in the wheeling flame, *Alatachakra*, even so was it in the play. Varying Bharata's metaphor, Abhinavagupta says it was one well-ground multi-coloured whole of drama, dance and music, like some rich perfume distilled from more than one essence, *Chitragandha*. Great as the *Sakuntala* and *Mrcchakatika* are as literary masterpieces, imagine how much more superb they would have been as finished productions on the stage, deepened with the additional dimensions of music and dance.

⁶ See my articles on some of these: Kathakali and other forms of Bharata Natya outside Kerala, *Yakshagana* and *Bhagavata Mela Nataka* in the *Triveni*, Madras, Vol. VI, pp. 147-170, Vol. VII, No. 2 and the journal of the *Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Calcutta, June-December 1937.